

making no plea for the incompetents. If men will not toil with their brain and keep their hearts fresh and young by keeping in touch with the best thought of the age in which they live, and with the best methods of work, they must inevitably suffer the consequences. What we are asking is that men who have lost none of their competence and are able and willing to think and plan and work for the Master should not be laid on the shelf simply because they have gray hairs. There is a good book which says: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness? Our churches need the influence of men of maturity, of years and of experience and of wisdom, to guide them safely through the perils that surround them. We say of our social order that something is wrong with it when men, who are able to work and willing to work, can secure no employment. Is it not equally true that there is something wrong in our ecclesiastical regulations and methods when so many men, capable of doing good work and pleading for the opportunity of doing it, are compelled to turn aside from the ministry to earn a support for themselves and family?" Of course there is "something wrong" in this thing.

It is not only a wrong against the good men who have committed themselves in faith and with zeal to the specific work of preaching Christ, but it is also wrong against the Holy Spirit who called them to such a work and bade them to give their life wholly to the great cause; and the Spirit will not particularly bless the church that despises a minister just because he has reached the age of fifty.

#### RELATION OF PASTORS TO MEMBERS

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This is a subject that is not just easy to approach. From the Gospel standpoint the relation is a very close one, and we have no right to consider it from any other point.

1st. The pastor is a brother. And from my point of view, does not cease to be a brother, when he becomes a pastor. He is chosen, or doubtless, should be, because of qualifications of grace, and spiritual endowment, peculiar to the ministry of the Gospel of God. While the position to which he is called, undoubtedly demands for him, sympathy, yet he is not an object of sympathy, but is expected to be a sympathizer with all, those who are weaker than himself. The word is latin, from "pasco" to feed.

The word occurs but once, I think, in the New Testament, i. e. Eph. 4: 11. "He gave some evangelists, some pastors (poimen), where it means "a feeder." The words "elder (presbuteros) and bishop (episkopos) occur a great many times. As also does the word deacon,

more oftener than all other of similar import. Let us here note a peculiar use Paul makes of the words in Acts 20: 28. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders (presbuteros) of the church, and . . . said . . . Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (episkopos) bishops. This illustrates the use of the words as understood and appropriated by the early Christians.

The word as it occurs in the Epistle to the Eph. 4: 11, means "to feed, cherish, foster, to guide, lead, govern, to sooth." This is indeed a wonderful relation. Well may we exclaim with the apostle "Who is sufficient for these things." I draw the conclusion then from the many places in the Gospels in which the word pastor and words of kindred import occur, that the responsibility of the position is so great that we as such ought never to go about the work without first seeking in prayer and much reflection on the word of God, the will of the Lord in the grave matters that constantly present themselves to the pastor of the church. We cannot come to a good understanding of the relation between pastor and his members without first looking at the duties of the pastors. 1st. Let us view the subject from Paul's point of view. "Wherefore I take you to record, this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." This means that he had fully preached the word, and was consequently not responsible for those who should be lost from not obeying it. See Ez. 3: 18, 19; Acts 18: 6. "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." This means the whole Gospel. And also I Cor. 2: 2. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." This means nothing but the Gospel.

Now let us look at the relation as it should be viewed by the pastor. *He must preach the Gospel.* I Cor. 9: 16, 17.

While free, yet must make himself a servant. I Cor. 9: 18, 19. Must be willing to suffer sacrifice. Rom. 9: 1, 2. He must meet the approval of God, whatever the opinion of man may be. II Tim. 2: 15. He must be willing to suffer, if he would reign. II Tim. 2: 12.

Doubtless the pastor has many duties aside from that of preaching the Word, among which is that of visiting, in which much of the most permanent and solid work is done. There may be a technical difference between the sickness of the body and sickness of the soul, but in the sight of God all are sick who are not in harmony with the divine law. Therefore to visit the sick in their afflictions opens up to us a very large field and one of great possibilities. I have reaped some of the best and most permanent results of my work, where I have sowed seed

in families where sore sickness had afflicted them and the hand of death had not spared them. The relationship between the pastor and those who are afflicted is very close and tender. For it was among the sick and very poor that Jesus our Lord sowed the Gospel seed most profusely.

The pastor should be careful, I think, that visits among his members should not take on a too light nature, but should be with an aim, i. e. to bring them closer to God. It sometimes seems singular to me that faith, doctrine and religion in general should be made a subject for as ready conversation among children of God, as that of the weather, crops, etc, but is not in many homes. Why is it not? Are they still strangers to God. If so, it is preeminently the business of the pastor to remedy this defect. "They that feared God, spake often one to another," opens to us a beautiful relationship. The pastor should sympathize; be willing to suffer (and not boast about it). Suffering preachers are much too rare. One who is not willing to become a sufferer with Christ should never enter the ministry. For we must teach by example as well as in word. In fact example is the only teaching that is sanctioned by the word of God.

Jesus said, "I am the way." That means that Jesus was his religion. The pastor is expected to be the very embodiment of kindness itself. But to be kind is not to be weak, vascilating, or compromising. For that father is not kind to his child, who allows it to play with the serpent.

If the preacher must preach the Word, then the members should go out into the world and illustrate it. For we should not overlook the fact that when God sent the Gospel into the world to save sinners, he gave it two hands, two feet, two eyes, two ears, and a nose. In fact it was simply God living in man. And the Gospel is not fully preached now, except where God lives in the men and women who preach it. Where there is life there is action. The Gospel cannot be put on paper. It must be worn on a form that is in the image of God. It will fit no other, it will decorate no other likeness. Therefore the difference between the pastor and the lay member, is in theory more than fact. The relationship is equal, for while one is driving the team, the other should be holding the plow. While the one may build the house, the other must adorn it and keep it.

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